

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. - 4. (canceled).

5. (currently amended) A halftone phase shift mask blank used as a material for manufacturing a halftone phase shift mask comprising:

a substrate,

a light-semitransmissive film having a required transmittance and phase shift amount and formed on said substrate, said light-semitransmissive film being one of (1) a single-layer structure containing a metal, silicon and nitrogen and ~~formed on said substrate~~ or (2) a multi-layer structure having an upper layer in a direction away from said substrate that contains a metal, silicon and nitrogen, and

an ammonium ion production preventing layer for preventing production of ammonium ions, which is formed with an oxidation of one of (1) a surface portion of said light-semitransmissive film of the single-layer structure or (2) a surface portion of said upper layer in said light-semitransmissive film of the multi-layer structure, respectively, so as to contain a metal, silicon, nitrogen and oxygen and which is exposed on the surface of said mask after said mask is manufactured,

said ammonium ion production preventing layer being less in nitrogen content (1) relative to said light-semitransmissive film other than the surface portion in said single-layer structure or (2) relative to said upper layer other than the surface portion in said multi-layer structure, respectively.

6. - 8. (canceled).

9. (currently amended) A halftone phase shift mask comprising:

a substrate,

a light-semitransmissive film having a required transmittance and phase shift amount and formed on said substrate, said light-semitransmissive film being one of (1) a single-layer

structure containing a metal, silicon and nitrogen and formed on said substrate or (2) a multi-layer structure having an upper layer containing a metal, silicon and nitrogen, and

an ammonium ion production preventing layer for preventing production of ammonium ions, which is formed with an oxidation of one of (1) a surface portion of said light-semitransmissive film of the single-layer structure or (2) a surface portion of said upper layer in said light-semitransmissive film of the multi-layer structure, respectively, so as to contain a metal, silicon, nitrogen and oxygen and which is exposed on the surface of said mask after said mask is manufactured,

said ammonium ion production preventing layer being less in nitrogen content (1) relative to said light-semitransmissive film other than the surface portion in said single-layer structure or (2) relative to said upper layer other than the surface portion in said multi-layer structure, respectively,

said light-semitransmissive film and said ammonium ion production preventing layer being provided with a predetermined pattern.

10. - 16. (canceled).

17. (previously presented) A halftone phase shift mask blank according to claim 5, wherein:

said ammonium ion production preventing layer has film thickness thinner than said light-semitransmissive film.

18. (canceled).

19. (previously presented) A halftone phase shift mask blank according to claim 5, wherein:

said ammonium ion production preventing layer has a chemically stable state in film structure relative to said light-semitransmissive film.

20. (canceled)

21. (previously presented) A halftone phase shift mask blank according to claim 5, wherein:

said light-semitransmissive film contains molybdenum as said metal.

22. (currently amended) A halftone phase shift mask blank according to claim 5, wherein:
a concentration of said ammonium ion is 20 ng/cm^2 or less.

23. (previously presented) A halftone phase shift mask blank according to claim 5,
wherein:

an exposure light source to the lithography mask is a KrF excimer laser or an ArF
excimer laser.

24. - 34. (canceled)